

REMARKS

Upon entry of the above amendment, the claims will be 7 to 12 directed to a method for the preparation of a coating solution and claims 13 to 15 directed to a process for forming a coating film.

Claims 7-12 have been rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Adachi on the ground that the reference teaches preparation of a composition by mixing one mole of tetramethoxy silane and one mole of DMF together with water and ammonia.

In reply, according to the claim of Adachi, one mole of a silicon alkoxide in an alcohol solution is admixed with 0.25-3.0 moles of DMF. As disclosed in Example 1 of Adachi, the amount of the alcohol (methanol) is in an equal volume to DMF which is used in an equimolar amount to tetramethoxy silane.

This formulation of the hydrolysis mixture is in clear contrast to the requirement in present claim 7, according to which the alkoxysilane compound is dissolved in step (a) in an alcohol in a concentration of 1 to 5% by weight calculated as SiO_2 . This concentration of the silane compound is, needless to calculate, much lower than in the Adachi formulation.

Moreover, while the method of claim 7 involves step (c) for the replacement of the alcoholic solvent, in which the hydrolysis reaction of the silane compound has been undertaken, with DMF, such a step of solvent replacement is neither taught nor suggested by Adachi even in the remotest sense. Thus, the method of claim 7 cannot be anticipated by Adachi.

Claims 13 to 15 have been rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Adachi in view of Takei. It appears from the sentence bridging pages 2 and 3 of the Official Action, that the Official Action contends that the sol composition of Takei can be used for coating in view of its reliance on paragraph [0002] of the translation of Takei including a phrase "overlying batches of the sol". This contention correlating Takei and present claim 13 is based on Applicants' own disclosure in this application.

The phrase of "overlying batches of the sol" means that, when a batch of the sol has only a small volume not sufficient for the preparation of a large monolithic block of silica glass, a

plurality of such small batches of the silica sol are laid one on the other so as to make up a large mass of the sol which can be converted into a large monolithic block of silica glass.

Incidentally, what is described in paragraph [0002] is a discussion of the problems in the prior art sol-gel method for the preparation of silica glass monoliths and has absolutely no relevance to the applicability of the silica sol to a method for coating, which is the subject matter of claim 13.


For the foregoing reasons, it is apparent that the rejections on prior art are untenable and should be withdrawn.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

Tatsuhiko SHIBUYA et al.

By: 
Matthew Jacob
Registration No. 25,154
Attorney for Applicants

MJ/pjm
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
May 29, 2001